1980 BACKGROUND PAPER NO. 1

SOCIAL INDICATORS FOR HAMILTON-WENTWORTH

Submitted by

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to the

Board of Directors

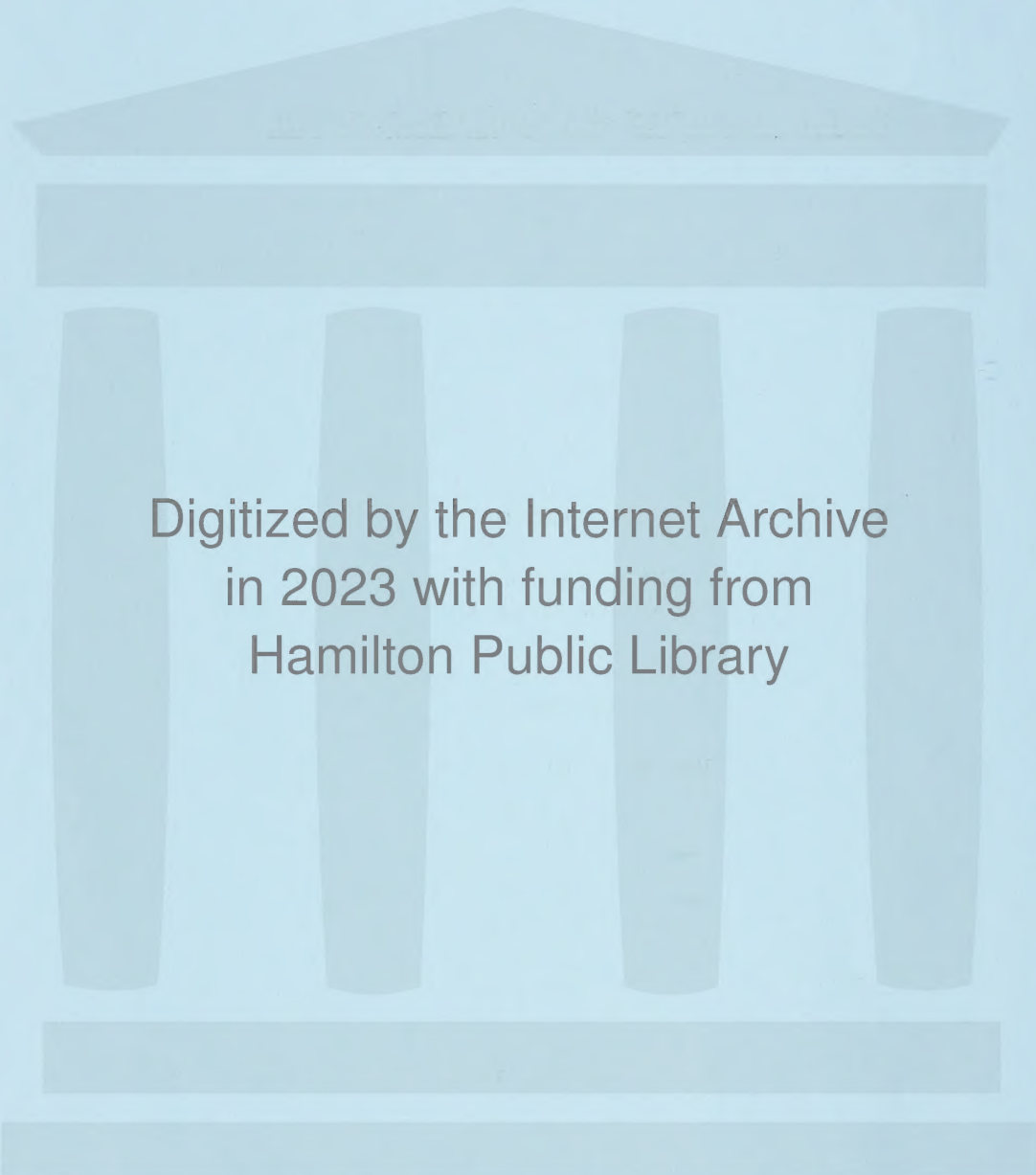January 18, 1980

This document has been prepared as a background paper for Social Planning and Research Council Board members for their use in making the various policy and project decisions which they will be called upon to make during the coming year.

It presents the "standing" of Hamilton-Wentworth, relative to other Ontario counties, on twenty-four key social indicators. The reference year is 1976 because this is the most recent year for which all of this data is available. It is unlikely that the position of the Region has changed substantially during the intervening three years.

The next discussion paper, to be presented at the next Board meeting, will examine the probable effects of the changing age distribution of the population upon many of these indicators during the 1980's.

SERVICE INDICATORS

Across all counties, our psychiatric admissions rate was about average.

Our social service expenditures, however, tended to be high. This could be attributable to four other factors referenced on the graph:-

1) A high rate of lone-parent families which typically results in a higher demand for day care and Family Benefits Assistance.

2) A higher than average rate of single young persons which accounts for a large proportion of the GWA caseload.

3) A slightly higher than average unemployment rate.

4) A slightly higher than average rate of adults with a relatively low level of education.

Some ambiguity does remain, however, particularly with General Welfare Assistance. Our unemployment rate was not high enough to completely account for the high GWA rate.

FAMILY INDICATORS

Our birthrate tended to be low which is a partial cause of a lower rate of population growth in the Region. Our birthrate to unmarried mothers was also below average which suggests that our high rate of lone parent families is due more to marital breakdown than to births to unmarried mothers.

Our marriage rate was slightly above average. This may be attributable to the apparent fact that we have a higher than average rate of single young persons who, of course, are prime candidates for marriage. It may also be partially due to the high lone parent rate insofar as the rate of remarriage among single parents increased throughout the seventies.

CRIME INDICATORS

We tended to be quite high in our rates of crime. This, of course, is partially due to the fact that we are an urban area. However, in comparison with the ten urban counties in Ontario, we ranked first in crime rates.

There is some problem in the uniform reporting of crime rates across the province. It is, therefore, important to exercise some care in interpreting comparisons. Even considering this factor, however, there is little doubt that we have higher crime rates than most other areas.

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FAMILY INFLUENCE

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There is some problem in the uniform report___ of crime rates across the province. It is, therefore, important to exercise some care in interpretive comparisons. Even considering this factor, however, there is little doubt that we have higher crime rates than most other areas.

Our police strength is above average, although it does not rank at the same high level as our crime rates. Statistics relating to the rates of charges and convictions in Hamilton-Wentworth, which are not presented here, show that our police force is at par with other forces in the province. The high crime rate is clearly not due to an inefficient or ineffective police force.

What then does account for the difference? Income data shows that we are more affluent than most counties so poverty does not necessarily account for the high crime rates.

It may be noteworthy that within violent crimes, our homicide rate is not particularly high. The high violent crime rate was more due to high rates of assault, both sexual and non-sexual.

This seems to be an area which warrants further study.

HEALTH INDICATORS

The Region had an average suicide rate and relatively low accidental and infant death rates.
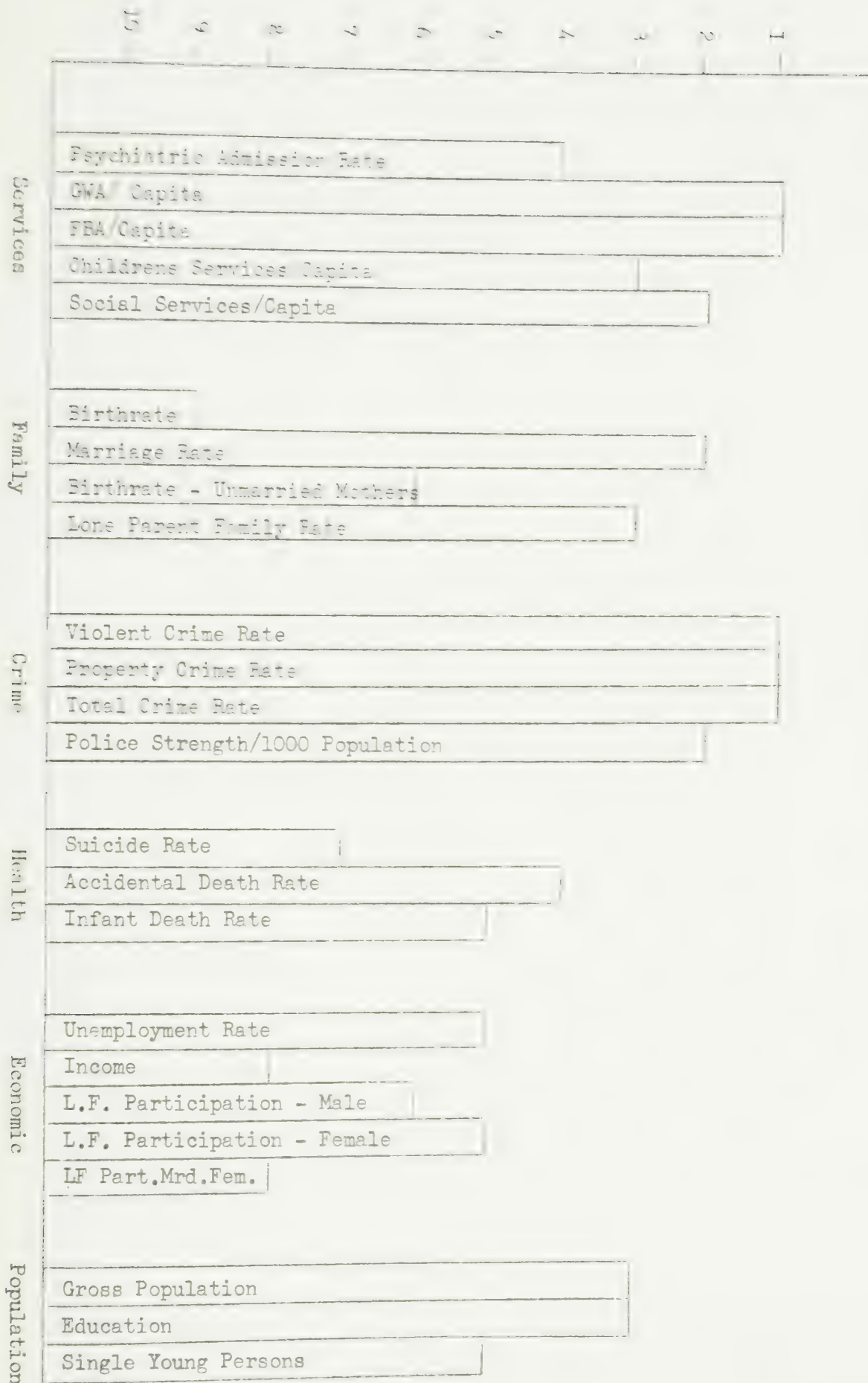
ECONOMIC INDICATORS

As mentioned earlier, our unemployment rate was only slightly above average, as was our labour force participation rate for females. We also had a slightly below average rate of labour force participation by females. This was particularly true of married females, where the participation was quite low. Average individual income tended to be quite high.

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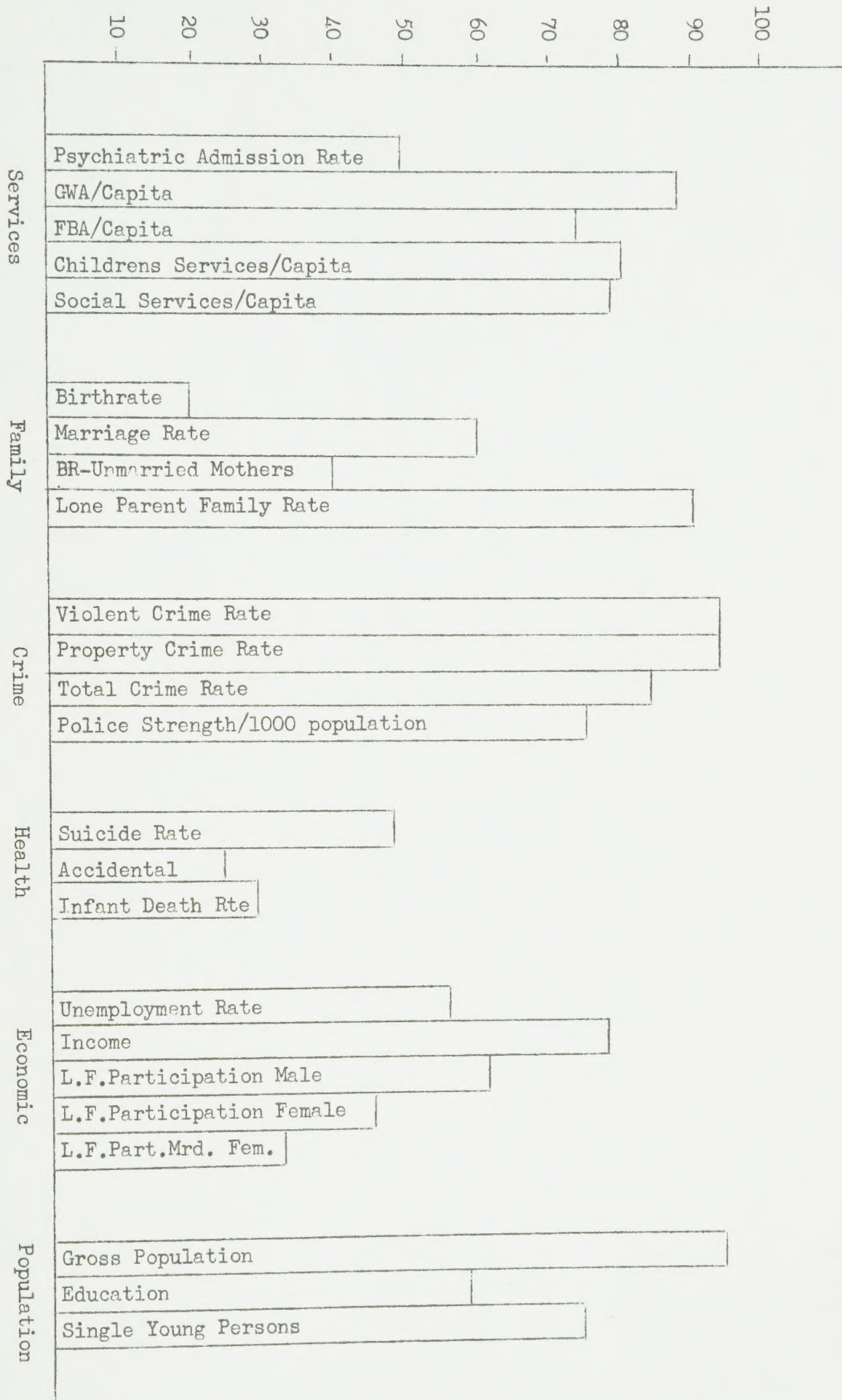quite high.

POPULATION

Not surprisingly, we had a much larger than average population. Our proportion of adults with a low level of education was slightly above average.

Our proportion of single young persons was quite high but this would be partially due to the existence of a large university. Compared to the other ten urban counties, which also have universities, our rate was average.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Services
- Psychiatric Admission Rate
- GWA/Capita
- FBA/Capita
- Childrens Services Capita
- Social Services/Capita

Family
- Birthrate
- Marriage Rate
- Birthrate - Unmarried Mothers
- Lone Parent Family Rate

Crime
- Violent Crime Rate
- Property Crime Rate
- Total Crime Rate
- Police Strength/1000 Population

Health
- Suicide Rate
- Accidental Death Rate
- Infant Death Rate

Economic
- Unemployment Rate
- Income
- L.F. Participation - Male
- L.F. Participation - Female
- LF Part.Mrd.Fem.

Population
- Gross Population
- Education
- Single Young Persons

Scale: 10 · 20 · 30 · 40 · 50 · 60 · 70 · 80 · 90 · 100

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